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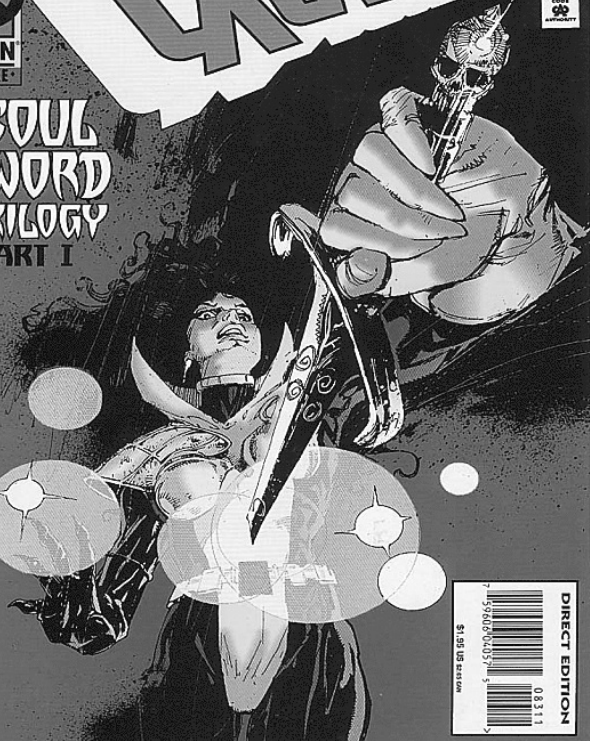
X-MEN

DELUXE

EXCALIBUR

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

SOUL SWORD TRILOGY PART I



DIRECT EDITION



\$1.99 US & 65 CAN

THE BLADE HANGS IN LIMBO.
SHEATHED, ITS LIVE STEEL
SEETHING WITH WHITE FIRE.

ONCE, IT WAS BONDED TO
A WARRIOR, WHO DREW
IT OFTEN, TOGETHER THEY
DEALT PAIN AND LOVED IT.

BUT NOW SHE IS GONE.
THE BLADE IS BONDED TO
ANOTHER, WHO HAS
ABANDONED IT.

THE SOUL SWORD
HAS WAYS OF DRAWING
ATTENTION TO ITSELF...

STAN LEE PRESENTS

BEND SINISTER

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JOE ROSAS: COLORIST
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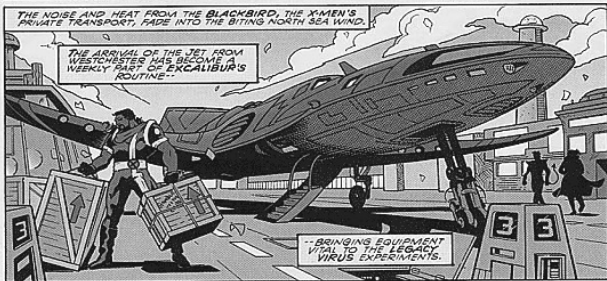
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MUIR ISLAND, OFF THE
NORTHERNMOST TIP OF
SCOTLAND...



THE NOISE AND HEAT FROM THE BLACKBIRD, THE X-MEN'S
PRIVATE TRANSPORT, FADE INTO THE BITING NORTH SEA WIND.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE JET FROM
WESTCHESTER HAS BECOME A
WEEKLY PART OF EXCALIBUR'S
ROUTINE--

--BRINGING EQUIPMENT
VITAL TO THE LEGACY
VIRUS EXPERIMENTS.



I AM PRIVILEGED TO
SERVE THE PROFESSOR
AND YOURSELVES IN
YOUR WORK, OF COURSE...

...BUT I FAIL TO SEE,
DR. MISTAGERT, WHY
COMMERCIAL COURIER
SERVICES, OR EVEN THE
MAIL, COULD NOT PER-
FORM THIS TASK.

MY ABSENCE IS
NOT GOOD FOR
SECURITY.



AYE, WELL,
WE CANNOT RELY
ON THE ROYAL
MAIL, THEY ONLY
TURN UP ONCE A
MONTH, IN
CLANKY WEB
HELICOPTERS...

AH,
THESE'LL BE
SENSOR ARRAY
RECORDINGS
THAT CHARLES
TOLD ME
ABOUT

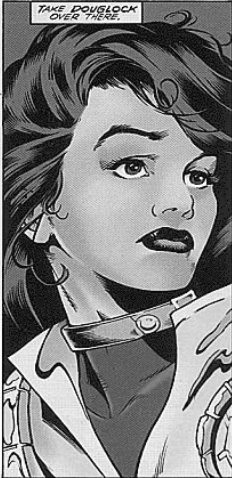
KITTY PRYDE JUST WATCHES THE WORLD GO BY.

SHE HAS A DAY LIKE THIS
A FEW TIMES A YEAR--
HER "OUTSIDER MOODS".
SHE CALLS THEM.

SHE HAD FOURTEEN
NORMAL YEARS
BEFORE THE X-MEN,
AND THEY RETURN
TO MAKE HER SEE
HER LIFE FROM THE
ORDINARY PERSON'S
POINT OF VIEW.



TAKE DOUGLOCK
OVER THERE.



SHE KNOWS
WHAT DOUGLOCK
IS--A FUSION OF
THE TECHNO-
ORGANIC ALIEN
WARLOCK--



--AND THE MEMORIES
OF MURDERED MUTANT
DOUG RAMSEY.



BUT, SOMETIMES,
HE LOOKS AWFULLY
LIKE A DEAD BOY
FILLED WITH WIRES.





KATZCHEN--

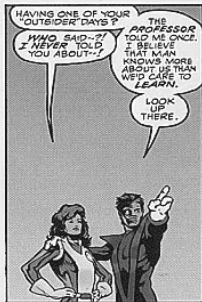
AAAAAA!

--KATZCHEN?
I DON'T
NORMALLY
MAKE YOU
JUMP LIKE
THAT.

DON'T THINK OF HIM AS
A BLUE SPECIAL-EFFECTS
BEASTIE WITH SKIN LIKE A RUG.

HE'S PROBABLY YOUR
BEST FRIEND.

SORRY,
KURT. I WAS
MILES AWAY,
YOU KNOW.



HAVING ONE OF YOUR
'OUTSIDER' DAYS?

WHO SAID--?/
I NEVER TOLD
YOU ABOUT--!

THE
PROFESSOR
TOLD ME ONCE.
I BELIEVE
THAT MAN
KNOWS MORE
ABOUT US THAN
WE'D CARE TO
LEARN.

LOOK
UP
THERE.



IT'S NOT DIFFICULT FOR THE 'ORDINARY PERSON'
TO SEE X-MEN AS FREAKS AND MONSTERS.

BUT LOOK AT THAT. ALL ANYONE'S
GOING TO SEE IS TWO PEOPLE IN LOVE.

PERHAPS BEING AN X-MAN
MEANS VALUING NORMAL
LIFE ALL THE MORE.





THE TOURIST POLICEMAN LOOKS ONTO HER LIKE A MISSILE GUIDANCE SYSTEM AS AMANDA HITS THE STREET.







MUIR ISLAND.

EEEEEEEEEE

MEGGAN,
PLEASE--MOIRA,
WHAT'S HAPPENING
TO HER?

THERE
NOW.

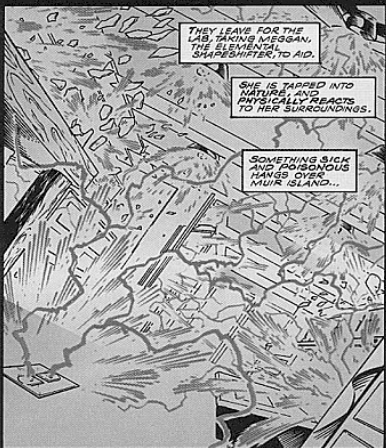
WE CAN APPLAUD
ME FORESIGHT
IN STOCKING
ADAMANTIUM-
TIPPED SYRINGES
FOR SUPER-TOUGH
SKINS IN A
WEE BIT...

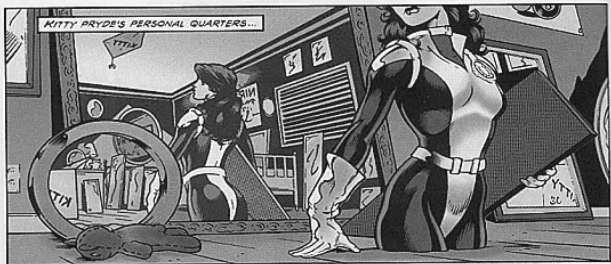
FIRST, WE GET HER
TO THE LAB, BEFORE THE
SEDATIVE WEARS OFF,
AND FIND WHAT CAUSED
THIS SUDDEN CONVUL-
SIVE ATTACK.

DO I LOOK
LIKE A SMOODY
MINDREADER,
BRIAN?

COME ON
NOW, MEGGAN--
--COME ON--
LET'S GET A
NEEDLE INTO A
VEIN HERE--

I'M JUST
PRAYIN' THAT
IT'S NOT THE
LEGACY VIRUS--
KITTY?











IT'S BEEN
SO LONG SINCE
THIS HAPPENED..

I HAD
NOTICED,
THANK
YOU.

DON'T
FUSS.. IT WAS
A SMALL PAIN,
CREATED BY
LOW-LEVEL
ACTIVITY.

THE SOUL
SWORD WAS
NOT DRAWN.
NOT YET.

THE BLADE
AND MY EYE--THEY
ARE MADE OF ALIEN
METALS, APPARENTLY
NOT INTENDED TO
EXIST TOGETHER IN
THE SAME
DIMENSION.

WHEN THE
HOLDER DOES
DRAW THE
SWORD--

I'LL BE
CRIPPLED
BY THE PAIN
AGAIN.

BEDRIDDEN
AND COMATOSE,
AS I WAS IN THE
DAYS WHEN THE
HOLDER DREW
THE BLADE
OFTEN.

I WAS
NEVER STRONG
ENOUGH TO ACT,
THEN.

NOW, I
AM FOREWARNED
BY THIS
EPISODE.

MY BROOCH
CONTAINS A FLECK
OF SOULSTEEL. LIKE
A COMPASS, I MAY
TRACK THE BLADE
WITH IT.

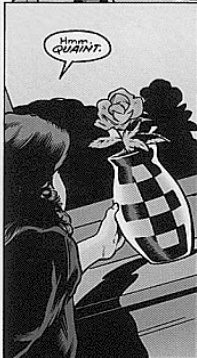
A CAREFUL
SORCERESS
MIGHT FIND
THE SWORD-
HOLDER-- AND
MAKE CERTAIN
IT IS NEVER
DRAWN
AGAIN...



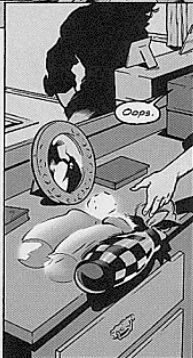
MUIR ISLAND; MOIRA McTAGGERT'S PERSONAL QUARTERS.



Hmm.
QUAINT.



Oops.



Aha. A WARDROBE.

MAYBE
MOIRA KEEPS
SOME NICE
CLOTHES

WHO'D I
KIDDING? I'LL
FIND THIRTY-
SEVEN IDENTI-
CAL LAB
COATS AND
UNITARDS.



MEN'S CLOTHES?
NEVER FIGURED MOIRA
FOR A DRAG ARTIST...



O-OH...
I GET
IT.

HA HA HA







WHAT'S
WRONG
W/ YE?

YOU'VE BEEN ACTING STRANGELY
ALL DAY-- YE CANNAE VIOLATE MY
PRIVATE PLACE LIKE THIS!

NOW PUT OUT THAT
CIGARETTE, TAKE MY
JOB'S JACKET OFF...

--AND
COME DOWN
TO THE
MED. LAB.
NOW.

I WAS
RIGHT, THEN?
THIS IS YOUR
DEAD HUSBAND'S
COAT?

SAD
LITTLE MORA.
CAN'T LET
ANYTHING
GO, CAN
YOU?

YOU KEEP
YOUR DEAD
SON'S GENETIC
MAKE-UP ON
DISC, AND YOUR
DEAD HUSBAND'S
CLOTHES IN
YOUR WARD-
ROBE.

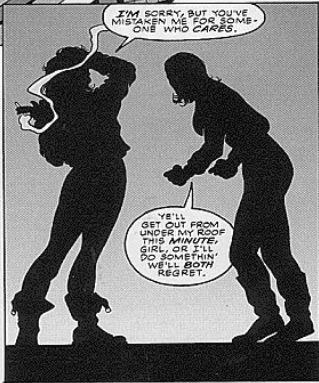
PATHETIC.



AND
WHERE DID
THE CIGAR-
ETTES COME
FROM?

IF IT'S
ANY BUSINESS OF
YUIRS-- I GAVE
UP YEARS AGO, BUT
KEPT 'EM AROUND
IN CASE OF A
LOSS OF WILL.

IT'S A LOSS O' TEM-
PER YOU SHOULD BE
WORRYING ABOUT, GIRL.



I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'VE
MISTAKEN ME FOR SOME-
ONE WHO CARES.

YE'LL
GET OUT FROM
UNDER MY ROOF
THIS MINUTE,
GIRL, OR I'LL
DO SOMETHIN'
WE'LL BOTH
REGRET.





Oh, MOIRA.

I'M GOING
TO HAVE TO
KILL YOU
NOW.



ONE LEVEL BELOW:
KURT WAGNER LEAVES
THE MEDLAB WHERE
MEGGAN IS INTERNED.



ALMOST WITHOUT
THINKING, KURT
TELEPORTS UP.



HIS TELEPORTATION IS NOT
INSTANT. BUT, AS THE LAWS
OF PHYSICS WILL NOT ALLOW
MATTER TO CEASE TO EXIST
FOR A MOMENT--

--KURT SPENDS A
FRACTION OF A
SECOND IN AN
ADJACENT DIMENSION.

SOMETIMES, AN
EYE BLINK CAN
SEEM LIKE AN
ETERNITY.

SOMETIMES, A
MAN OF MAGIC
CAN MAKE IT
THAT WAY.

A MAN OF MAGIC
CAN CHANGE ANYTHING.

THIS IS GRAVEMOSS,
A NECROMANCER,
SPEAKER TO THE DEAD--

...AND
POSSESSOR
OF THE
LIVING.

TO BE CONTINUED.

SWOR STROKES

C/O MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 397 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NY, NY 10016. PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR FULL ADDRESS PRINTED.

SUZANNE GAFFNEY - EDITOR - BOB HARRAS - GROUP EDITOR

DELUXE EDITIONS:

Welcome to the age of *DELUXE*! From now on, all the X-titles will sport glossy stock paper and computer color separations that are gonna blow your mind! All this, and a measly \$1.95 cover price, I'boot! So, all you die-hard WOLVERINE, EXCALIBUR and CABLE fans out there are in for a real treat! Not only do you get a better looking comic book, you're getting higher quality for the same amount of moles!

Sounds crazy, doesn't it? Marvel's finally gone over the deep end with this whole technology shtick, right? We say three, "Nay!"

'Cuz for those of you who are not exactly fans of change, we're going to continue printing non-Deluxe versions of the books — which will hit the shelves two weeks after the Deluxe editions and will be printed on newsprint paper at the old \$1.50 price — so that you can still enjoy all the X-citement without your wallet taking the beatings that only the super-villains deserve!

Dear EXCALIBUR,

Everybody who remembers Warlock warning Doug Ramsey about the dangers of their merging has expected his return since Doug was killed. Thank you for handing it so well. I'm really interested to see where this will go. Will there be an emergence of Doug's personality? I hope so.

ALL RIGHT!! The return of Amanda Sefton. Keep her around, will you? What a great character. What a great shame that she's been ignored for so long. And her assurances to Rory were exceptional, but nix on any romance there! Keep her and Kurt back together where they belong! Kurt's had ENOUGH heartache.

I'm not sure I like what's happening with Britanic, but I am very interested. I reserve judgment. And, great development with Meggan's powers! Who knew?

I will miss Rachel, and hope somehow for her return. Kitty continues to be wonderful. Kitty. The most exciting turn was, of course, Zero downloading into Doug at the last second. I hope this means an antidote will be discovered just in the nick of time to save Moira. As I've stated before, I love comics because they offer a reprieve from realism. I have enough pain in my world. A cure for the Legacy Virus would inspire hope for real.

Very nice art from Amanda Connor and your trio of inkers. Thanks to everyone who's working on the book.

Doug Tennant
(Address withheld by request)

And thanks to you, Doug, and everyone

else who's been writing in, for sticking with us as we go through all these new and exciting changes at Muir Island.

Regarding the possible emergence of Doug Ramsey's personality...keep an eye on everyone's perceptions of his behavior. It's going to make for some interesting situations.

As for Kurt's and Amanda's relationship...as you saw in this issue, something mysteriously mystical is brewing, and there's no doubt that these two are gonna be affected!

Dear Creators,

In the last year you have supplied us with some solid and entertaining stories and pleasing artwork. However, I'm a bit disappointed by the overall direction that the title has taken of late. When I heard that closer ties to the X-Men were to be established, I was really pleased. The X-books have some of the most interesting characters and plots in the industry. However, so did EXCALIBUR under the reign of Alan Davis, but since his departure, the book has become nothing more than an X-Men "hanger-on." All the plots from the last few issues were plots started in other X-books. EXCALIBUR's own individual comic book identity has been forgotten.

I couldn't believe it when, in issue #70, all the characters who weren't directly related to the X-Men were written out! Cerise, Feron, Micromax and (particularly) Kylon were all characters with great potential, but that potential has been wasted. I hear that the latter two are to be featured in this year's annual, but I'd rather see these characters back in the regular series. I'm glad you brought back Brian and Meggan, but why couldn't they come back as they were? Previously, they were convincing, three-dimensional characters, but now that Brian answers only to the name "Britanic" and Meggan has gone all weird, the personal dynamics that these two contributed to the past success of the team no longer exist. The "old" Brian and Meggan planned to marry. What's happened to those plans? How do they feel about each other? And, are they even capable of holding a normal conversation with Kitty and the others now? There used to be a family feel to the team, but how can this endure when two of their number are perceiving the world on a different level?

Britanic seems quite concerned about justice, so surely he's still interested in tracking down Sat-Yr-9 for the murder of Courtney Ross. He'll certainly want to capture his brother Jamie! And, don't Marlyn wait revenge? There's potential for a mega-

multipart storyline if I ever saw it. Hey, the X-Men could even cross over with Excalibur on this one (instead of the other way around)! I'd also like to know what Dai Thomas and Alistair are up to these days. And, what has happened to Gatecrasher and her Technet?

Okay, you get the idea already. I know that closer ties to the X-Men mean an increase in sales, but surely you can achieve this without massacring the old identity of the book! I have faith in you people! Thanks for listening!

A. D. Musgrave
104 Link Road
Antony, Leicester LE17 2BK
U.K.

The name's Musgrave, eh? Are you sure that it's not — *Gravemoss*?? How do we know you're who you say you are, and not that mysterious necromancer trying to take over this letters page like he did Nightcrawler at the end of this issue? We've got our eye on you, A. D., so you better not make any suspicious moves!

As for your comments...no, EXCALIBUR is not the same book that it once was. However, just because it sometimes feels like an extension of the other X-titles does not mean that it doesn't carry its own weight. Take this issue, for example. The storyline beginning here isn't based on events that happen to the other X-characters. Rather, it focuses on the status quo of the present cast, and the outcome of these events may be felt at a later date by the rest of the X-line (in much the same way as has been happening lately between the books). So, not only do you get to see major events happening to Excalibur, but the seeds are planted for future storylines involving the rest of the X-universe. That's the key to their interaction. Dig?

And about Britanic and Meggan...well, as you saw this issue, they're still doing that love thing, but they may have problems if Moira can't figure out what's suddenly wrong with Meggan!



NEXT ISSUE:

The ghoulish *Gravemoss*! The shadowy *Shrii*! More mystical maliciousness than you can shake a Soulsword at! Be here in thirty for the possession of Shadowcat in the haunting "Dark Adapted Eye" by Warren Ellis and Darick Gross!